

All the cases studied by Dr. Lennette's group show a history of measles from two to eight years prior to the first symptoms of the disease. In some cases the level of measles antibodies has risen with the onset of SSPE. This indicates an immune reaction to a measles-type organism and therefore a connection between the SSPE organism and measles.

What apparently happens, Dr. Lennette says, is that the measles virus lies quiescent after the first attack. After a while some as yet unknown stimulus then causes it to become active in the central nervous system. There it produces a disease which proceeds shortly from behavioral changes to ataxia and finally to coma and death. There are several hundred cases of the disease each year in the U.S.

Dr. Lennette says attempts to culture the virus from samples taken from living patients have failed, suggesting that the virus has in some way become defective. While it carries all the genetic information borne by the ordinary virus it has lost its infectivity.

What appears likely is that the initial antibody attack on invading viruses does not always completely neutralize all of a virus that may be present. Some of it may be merely modified, and under certain conditions may still be able to do great damage.

CIVILIAN USES CUT

AEC budget under Hill knives

This is the year of the cut budget. One Federal agency after another has seen its budget proposal sliced by Congressional knives.

The latest to emerge is the Atomic Energy Commission budget, which suffered a very selective trimming and a couple of significant grafts at the hands of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy.

The general trend is down. The AEC had asked for a total of \$2.9 billion for fiscal 1969—\$277 million more than it got in 1968. The Joint Committee recommends a cut of \$302 million, thus bringing the 1969 authorization below that for 1968.

The AEC's proposals for its military activities survived intact—and one was increased. Civilian research took the cuts; the biggest slash was in the 200-400 billion-electron-volt accelerator project at Weston, Ill.

The AEC had asked for \$243 million for the Weston project; the Joint Committee recommended \$25 million. The \$25 million, however, represents the anticipated expense for this year. The commission had requested a lump authorization for the whole project. So the cut represents money that was not to be spent in the coming year anyway.

Other cuts were made in reactor research, physics research, biological research and community programs. A few of these items escaped unscathed but most were abraded by amounts up to five percent. For two civilian projects the Joint Committee made exceptions and added money to the AEC's request.

The Plowshare program for peaceful use of nuclear explosives was increased from \$14.5 million to \$17 million as a result of the Joint Committee's pleasure over the success of the Cabriole and Buggy One tests (SN: 3/23, p. 280). The budget request had been made up before these shots and had been cut by half from 1968.

The isotopes development program was increased from \$7.2 million to \$8 million, a result of the Joint Committee's concern over efforts to develop a radioisotope-powered engine to assist human hearts.

In the military sphere, to which more than \$1 billion of the total budget is allocated, all items came through as requested with one exception. The item for naval propulsion was increased from a requested \$115.3 million to \$123.8 million. This increase represents the Committee's desire to go ahead with development of a power plant for a nuclear attack submarine, as suggested by Vice Adm. Hyman G. Rickover.

FDA MOVES

Antibiotics in animals

New data show that food animals may retain some antibiotics for as long as 47 days, and that medication can persist even longer in the kidneys of treated animals, the Food and Drug Administration reports. Closer FDA regulations over animals that furnish milk and eggs as well as meat to the consumer will be the result of the research.

The withdrawal periods established under the Food Additive Amendments of 1958 to insure that there will be safe residues or no residues of antibiotics have been found impractical. Not only are some persons allergic to the antibiotics used; lavish use of the medications could favor the growth of drug-resistant communicable germs.

Proposed regulations were published in the Federal Register for April 11, and interested persons were given 60 days to submit comments on the proposed regulation revisions.

Veterinary antibiotics for external application or use on the eyes of animals may continue to be used as they do not cause residues in foods, but internal drugs, especially Streptomycin, will probably be forbidden.

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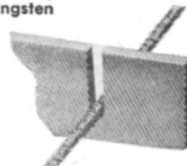
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